

How the far-right AfD shapes German government policy

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The aggressive smear campaign by right-wing media, far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) officials, and Christian Democrat politicians, which led to the withdrawal of law professor Frauke Brosius-Gersdorf's candidacy as a Supreme Court judge, makes two things clear.

First, it reveals the right-wing character of the Merz government, formed by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), its Bavarian sister party the Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), whose policies are visibly dictated by the AfD. Second, it refutes the propaganda of the SPD, Left Party, Greens and trade unions, which claim that the AfD can be fought and pushed back through the election and support of nominally "democratic" parties.

In reality, it is exactly the other way around. The governing parties adopt the AfD's right-wing policies and pave the way for it to take power step by step.

With its agitation against Brosius-Gersdorf, the far-right party, which in part openly holds fascist positions, decided who can and cannot run for a judicial position at Germany's highest court. This has far-reaching consequences.

The *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional [Supreme] Court) wields significant political power. It can declare majority decisions of the Bundestag (federal parliament) unconstitutional, thus effectively making law itself. It is the only body that can ban political parties, regulate disputes between the federal government and the states, and is the highest authority in all legal matters.

We have shown in a previous article how the smear campaign against Brosius-Gersdorf was staged. As is so often the case, it began with the tabloid *Bild*. Its former editor-in-chief, Julian Reichelt, who now runs the far-right outlet *Nius*, demanded that Brosius-Gersdorf must be "stopped!"

AfD leader Alice Weidel reposted Reichelt's statement.

AfD MP Beatrix von Storch claimed on X that Brosius-Gersdorf was a "left-wing radical activist who essentially advocates abortion up to the ninth month." This was followed by tens of thousands of posts attacking the candidate. Members of parliament were flooded with emails. The candidate herself received suspicious postal deliveries and threats directed against her, her family and her staff.

We wrote:

The allegations against Brosius-Gersdorf were largely fabricated. She is an established professor of public law with a long academic career and is currently teaching at the University of Potsdam. Her views, according to *Der Spiegel*, lie "within the legal mainstream."

When Brosius-Gersdorf withdrew her candidacy, the AfD celebrated. Its deputy federal spokesperson, Stephan Brandner, demanded that the SPD's second proposed candidate should also be blocked. Brandner and the AfD relied in this campaign on close cooperation with right-wing networks within the Union (CDU/CSU) parties, which aim for direct AfD participation in government.

At the end of February's federal election, the AfD became the second strongest party. The outgoing coalition of the SPD, Greens and Liberal Democrats (FDP) had paved the way for this with its militaristic, anti-working-class and anti-immigrant policies. While the governing parties lost around 20 percent of the vote, the AfD was able to channel popular anger against the government and double its share of the vote.

The SPD lost the most, nearly 10 percent, having forfeited its working class base since the "Hartz" laws 20 years ago, which introduced harsh welfare and labour

reforms, and reduced itself to a skeleton supported by career politicians, union officials and better-off middle class layers. Despite achieving its worst result since 1887, the SPD rushed back into government and now holds key levers of power through the finance and defence ministries.

This strengthens the AfD, which has continued to gain ground since the federal election one and a half years ago and now polls neck-and-neck with the Union. It also encourages the Union's right wing to work even more closely with the far-right and prepare its entry into government.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz—regardless of all the talk about a “firewall”—is ready to cooperate with the AfD. He demonstrated this before the federal election and before forming the new government.

The events of January 29 are still fresh in memory. The Bundestag session began with a memorial marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, featuring solemn speeches about “Never Again!” That same afternoon, Merz put his five-point migration plan to a vote—a plan that in every respect mirrored the AfD's racist policies—and won a majority with AfD votes.

This was a deliberate provocation to test whether forming a government with the AfD was already feasible.

In light of the massive protests and spontaneous mass demonstrations against the AfD, the ruling circles decided to temporarily form a coalition with the SPD to push through the enormous rearmament programme and the associated attacks on social benefits, pensions, wages and jobs—and to suppress the expected resistance with the help of union leaders.

But the right-wing cabal in the Union has since been increasingly vocal. In early May, 18 MPs from the governing parties refused to vote for Merz in the chancellor election, causing him to fail in the first round—an unprecedented event in the history of the Federal Republic.

The SPD credibly stressed that all its MPs had voted for Merz. After all, the party was simply relieved to be back at the cabinet table after its electoral disaster and did not want to risk Merz's election failing under any circumstances. The vote was secret, but all indications suggest the dissent came from right-wing Union MPs, signalling to the chancellor that he depends on their approval.

The Left Party came to the chancellor candidate's aid, ensuring the necessary support so that a second vote could

take place that same day, in which Merz was successful. In other words: in the name of fighting the right and the AfD, the Left Party supports the Merz government—which is pursuing the largest military build-up since Hitler, dismantling social programmes, dismantling asylum rights, and acting as a Trojan horse for AfD participation in government.

During the election of *Bundesverfassungsgericht* judges, the AfD-aligned right-wing factions in the Union once again demonstrated their strength. They defied a coalition decision, ignored party discipline, and made it clear how weak and crisis-ridden this government is.

The Merz government is a government of crisis, staying in power only because it is supported by all other “democratic parties” and the trade union apparatus.

The Left Party plays a particularly cynical role in this. It loudly poses as anti-right, joins protests against the AfD, but at the same time supports the federal government, which is preparing for AfD participation in government. Its specific role is to suppress any serious initiative aimed at an effective fight against the AfD, rearmament, war, layoffs and social cuts at their root—that is, on the basis of an international socialist programme opposing capitalism.

It is necessary to face political reality. There is no “lesser evil” among the Bundestag parties. All parties support rearmament, financed through social cutbacks.

The only way to stop the rise of the AfD and the shift to the right in the state apparatus is to build an international socialist movement within the working class and youth—a movement that combines the fight against war, militarism, social cuts and dictatorship with the struggle against capitalism and for a socialist society. This requires building the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP), which fights for this perspective.



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